

Unearthing Franklinton's Potential: Cultivating a Vibrant Foodscape

Michelle Kaiser, MSW, MPH, PhD¹; Nicholas Stanich, MA²;

¹College of Social Work, ²Franklinton Farms

USDA NIFA Community Food Project #2016-33800-25601,

Project #OHOW-2016-02514

OVERALL PROJECT GOALS

Unearthing Franklinton's Potential: Cultivating a Vibrant Foodscape is a three-year endeavor from September 2016-August 2019 that involves three distinct components to address the need to:

1. Improve *healthy food access* through a neighborhood Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program;
2. Strengthen *community self-reliance* and inspire *community empowerment* through cooking classes and workshops on nutrition, food processing, and leadership;
3. Expand participation of low-income Franklinton residents in programming that improves affordable *healthy food access* through marketing and promotion activities.



Additionally, the project:

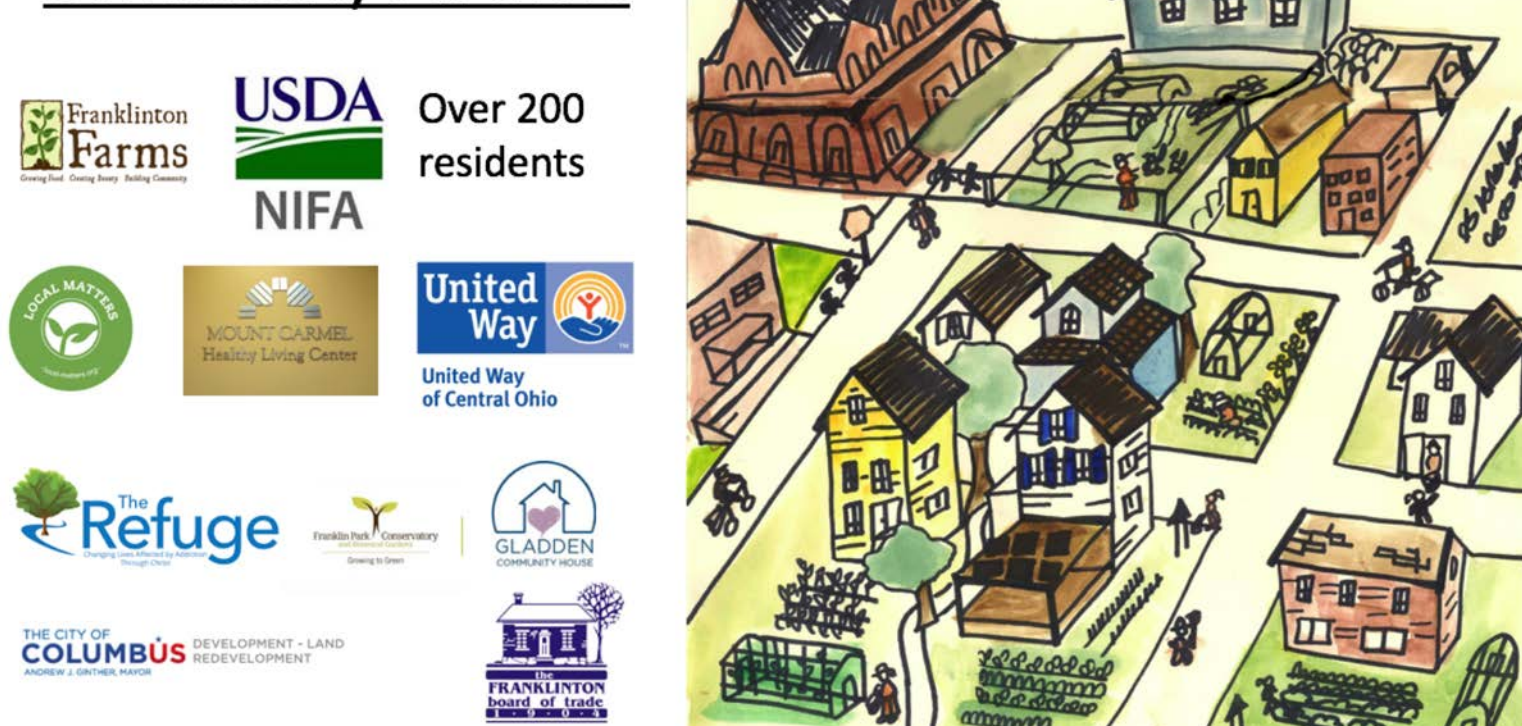
- Engages residents in different parts of the food system;
- Preserves land for urban agriculture;
- Creates inviting urban farm spaces

Washing/Packing for our CSA



PROJECT PARTNERS

Community Partners



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

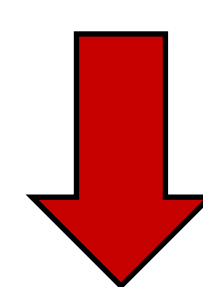
- 1) In what ways can a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in a low-income urban Appalachian community affect community food security (CFS), healthy food access, and consumer connection to food sources and the environment?
- 2) What lessons can we learn about implementing a CSA program in a low-income community?

BACKGROUND

Three narratives have defined the Franklinton neighborhood.



- Floods → 20 years of neglect, urban decay
- Poverty, Low Education, Crime, Addiction
- Food Insecurity > 33%, Median Income (\$15k)

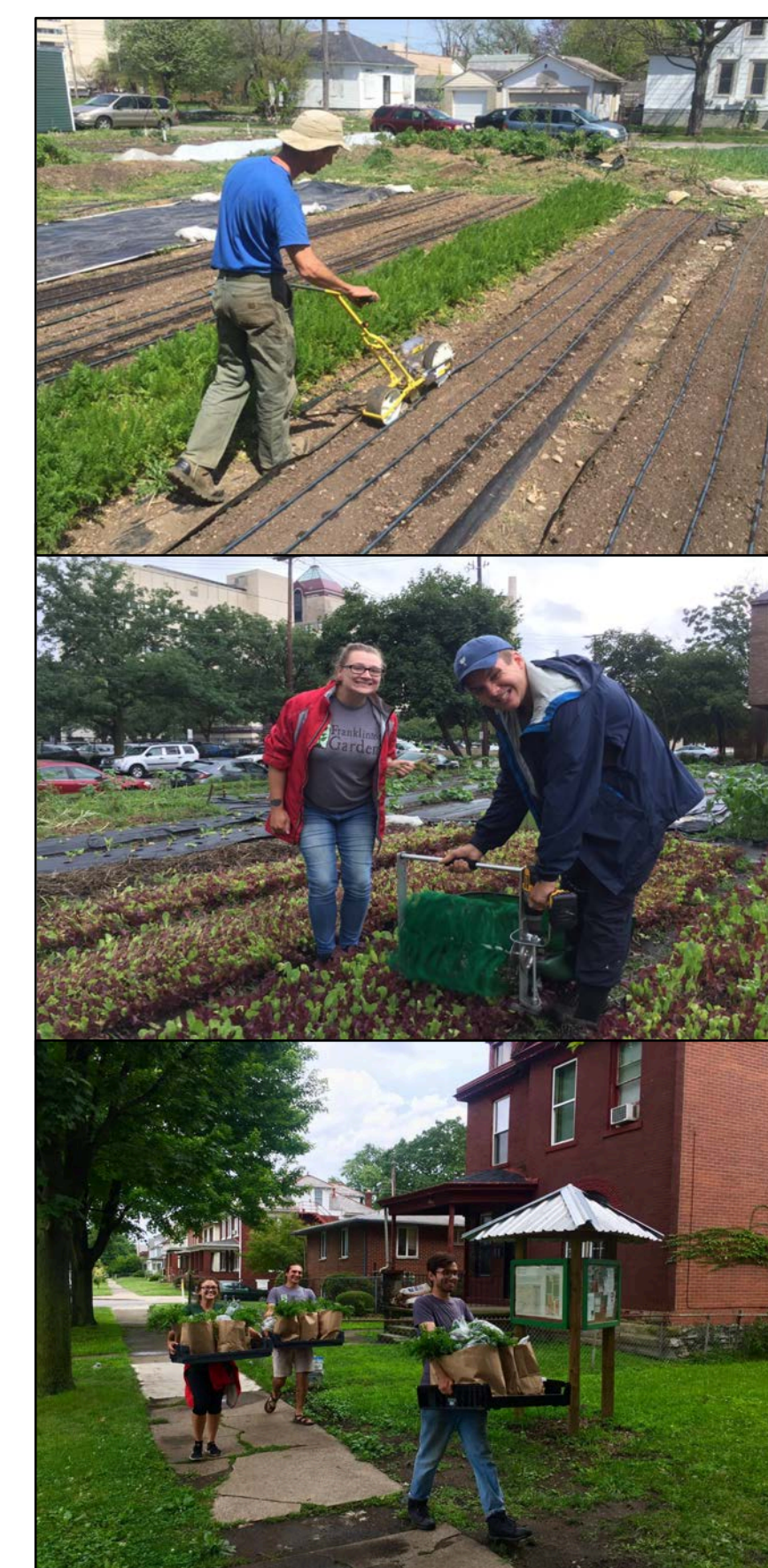


We are working towards a new community-driven narrative that:

- Focuses on neighborhood self-reliance
- Is rooted in neighborhood-based natural assets and human capital
- Retains traditional knowledge and returns to cultural values related to stewardship of resources
- Supports the health and well-being of ALL people
- Encourages food as a way to connect us all

PROGRAM DELIVERY

- **Healthy Food Availability:** Weekly CSA Share valued at \$20-\$25 (Summer) and \$15 (Winter)
- **Affordability:** Costs \$10/\$20 per week (Summer) and \$5/\$10 per week (Winter); Payments: SNAP/EBT, Produce Perks, Flexible payment schedule
- **Food Access:** Delivered to home via volunteers (car, bike, walk)
- **Urban Agriculture:** Food grown by Franklinton Farms, 2+ acre scattered site urban farm in neighborhood
- **Education:** Newsletter, Classes



EVALUATION METHODS

- 1) CSA Member Commitment Forms (Demographics)
- 2) Pre/Mid and Post-Season Surveys
- 3) Interviews w/ ED, Farm Manager, Americorps VISTA members
- 4) Post-Season Focus Group
- 5) Participant Observation



SURVEY TOPICS

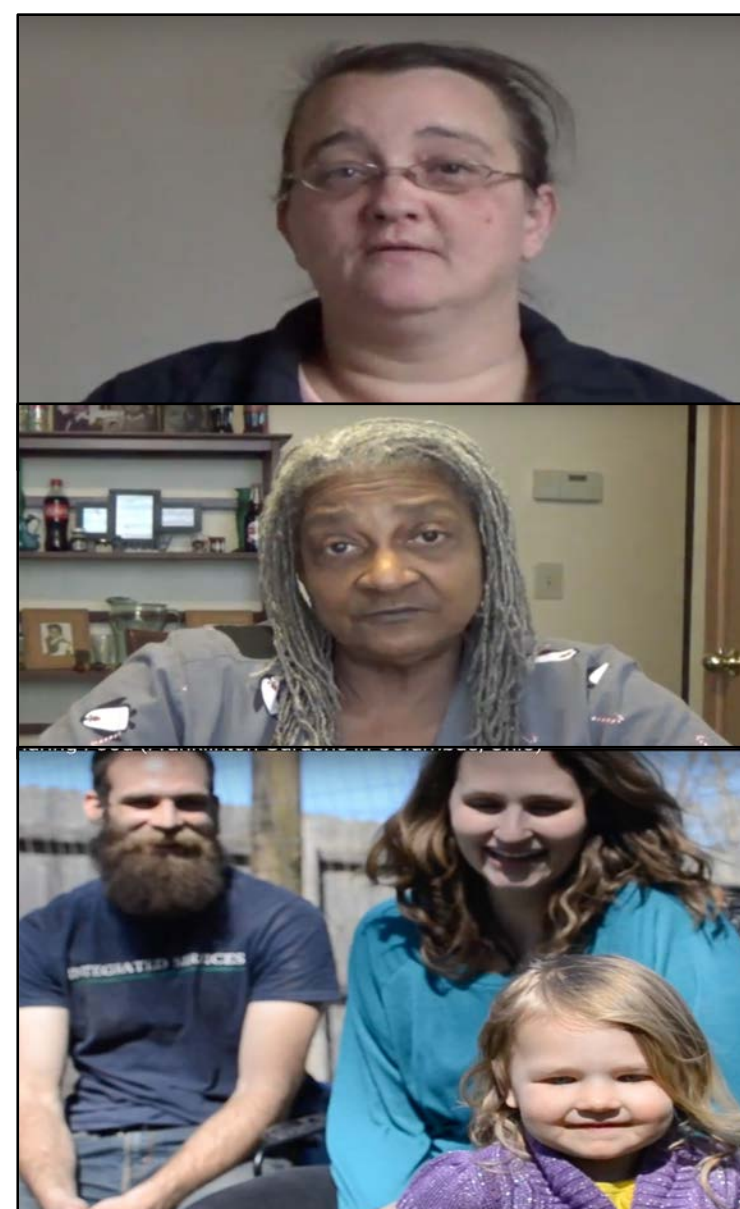
- Fruit and Vegetable Consumption
- USDA 10-item Food Security Scale
- Fruit/Vegetable Inventory
- Efficacy re: food access and diet
- Brief Sense of Community Scale (Peterson, Speer, & McMillan, 2008)
- Civic Engagement & Community Participation
- Household Food Decisions
- Community Food Participation
- Demographic Information



2018 was a difficult year at Franklinton Farms. Steve (left) moved on to OEFFA after serving as the farm manager. Patrick (middle) was a co-founder and died after a 7-month battle with Stage 4 Melanoma. Nick (right) continues to serve as ED. Community-engaged work is challenging, fulfilling, and honest to the realities of life and death on an organization and community. Thank you to those on the ground making good things happen!

CSA MEMBER CHARACTERISTICS

- **77 unique households through 3 seasons**
 - Retention related to whether quantity or type of produce was considered valuable
 - Households who lost SNAP benefits (usually to improvement in job/income, often left program because it was cost prohibitive (even paying half-price))
- **Participants:** Summer 2017, 2018: 40 households/season; Winter 2017-2018: 20 households (~50% pay half-price based on self-selection, % AMI, % poverty level)
- **Income:** 19% <\$15k/year, 15% between \$15k-\$24,999/years, 29% between \$25-\$49,999/year
- **Food security status:** ~22%; (Avg 8.4% low, 13.9% very low)



Why Participating in the CSA?

- "Because finding a ride to the store to buy fresh fruits and vegetables is a pain cause I have no car, no job, no money, and they deliver." [better food access]
- "We like the idea of knowing exactly where our produce is coming from." [knowledge of source]
- "Produce free from harmful pesticides or chemicals to prolong freshness." [environmental]

- Fresh
- Local
- Health reasons
- Support community
- Delivery
- Set example for kids
- Sustainable
- Trust Franklinton Farms

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: YEAR 1 & 2

Households	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increased consumption of vegetables- Tried new foods, recipes, shopped less at stores and were more health-conscious- Required new shopping and preparation behaviors based first around the CSA items, which was described as fun and challenging- Delivery was important- Price was about right for ability to pay and amount of food- Food waste was an issue (related to taste preferences, uncertainty about using the whole food, too many items for what household was used to eating)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Households liked supporting a community organization, knowing where food was grown, and meeting people involved at Franklinton Farms- Higher participation in community festivals, potlucks, community conversations- Overwhelming majority want to engage more in classes (cooking, composting, valued-added products) and take a tour, volunteer, or help out- Some interested in leadership development (training, Board)

LESSONS LEARNED

- Word of mouth, presence in neighborhood, flyers are best communication methods for neighborhood
- CSAs require some investment by households and may shift shopping, preparation, so best to provide some level of convenience (delivery)
- Know your community and be flexible with payments, understand various values around food
- Need creative partnerships at all stages, good record-keeping, data